



Fish Consumption Advice for the St. Louis River Area of Concern

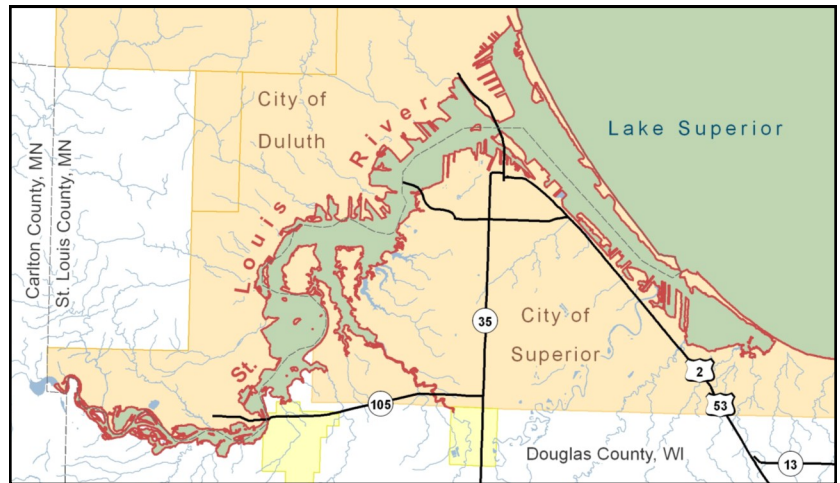


Benefits of eating your catch

Fish are a nutritious family food. Some of the benefits of catching and eating 1-2 servings per week include:

- Low cost and fun to catch your own fish
- Low in fat, yet high in protein
- Great source of vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids

However, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury pose health risks and prompt the need for fish consumption advisories. See page 2 for recommendations on eating fish from the St. Louis River and Lake Superior.



Where do PCBs and mercury come from?

PCBs are man-made chemicals that were used in electrical equipment, industrial processes, and manufacturing and recycling of carbonless copy paper. Restrictions on PCB use, manufacturing, and disposal began in the 1970's. PCBs were discharged to waterways, remain in the sediments, and build up in the foodchain.

Mercury is a natural element in the earth but is released into the air through several industrial activities. Airborne mercury deposits on land and water. It is then converted to a form that bioaccumulates in the foodchain reaching higher levels in some fish. Mercury accumulates to higher concentrations in larger, predatory fish and in other fish from some waterbodies.

What are the health risks?

PCBs

- Developmental impairments in children
- Harmful to the reproductive system
- Associated with a higher risk of cancer
- Harmful to the immune system
- Alters thyroid hormones

Mercury

- Damage to developing brains of children, which can cause learning disabilities
- Memory loss
- Heart disease
- Loss of coordination affecting vision, hearing and speech

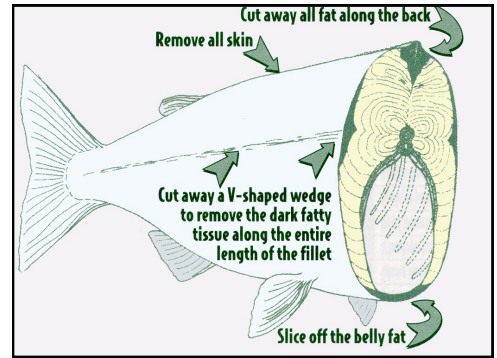


Fisherman's catch on the St. Louis River.
Photo by Terry Heatlie, NOAA

How should I prepare and cook my fish?

Proper cleaning and cooking techniques can reduce PCB levels by up to 70%. Follow the following preparation techniques:

- Fillet your fish
- Remove the skin
- Trim away belly fat, fat on the backsides and fatty dark meat
- Do not eat the eggs
- Bake, broil, or grill
- Discard all liquids and frying oils



St. Louis River/Superior Harbor

Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:

1 meal per week - bluegill, bullheads, crappies, yellow perch

and

1 meal per month - walleye under 20", pike, bass, catfish, carp and all other species;

Do not eat - walleye over 20", muskies

Women beyond childbearing years (over 50) and men may eat:

Unrestricted - bluegill, bullheads, crappies, yellow perch

1 meal per week - walleye under 20", pike, bass, catfish and all other species;
and

1 meal per month - walleye over 20", carp, muskies

Lake Superior and tributaries

Women of childbearing years, nursing mothers and all children under 15 may eat:

Unrestricted - smelt

1 meal per week - burbot, brown trout, chinook salmon under 32", coho salmon, chubs, lake herring, lake trout under 22", lake whitefish, rainbow trout, yellow perch

and

1 meal per month - chinook salmon over 32", lake trout 22 to 37", lake sturgeon over 50", siscowet lake trout under 29", walleye

6 meals per year - lake trout over 37", siscowet lake trout 29 to 36"

Do not eat - siscowet lake trout over 36"

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